

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION MBFR-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 ACDA-19 IO-13 H-03 AEC-11 OMB-01 OIC-04 SS-15

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNMR SHAPE

S E C R E T BONN 13285

SHAPE FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, GW

SUBJECT: MBFR COMMON CEILING: AMBASSADOR'S DISCUSSION
WITH DEFENSE MINISTER

REF: (A) STATE 181825(NOTAL), (B) BONN 13080

1. DURING A SEPT 13 CALL ON DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER
I RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY POSITION
CONCERNING THE MBFR COMMON CEILING PROBLEM AND THE
LINKAGE BETWEEN MBFR PHASES I AND II. IN DOING SO,
I DREW FULLY UPON THE DEPT'S HELPFUL GUIDANCE,
EMPHASIZING THE EFFORT MADE BY THE U.S. TO MEET FRG
INTERESTS IN MBFR BUT STRESSING THAT IT WOULD NOT BE
POSSIBLE FOR US TO INSIST ON A COMMON CEILING AGREE-
MENT FROM THE SOVIETS AS A PRECONDITION FOR AN MBFR I
AGREEMENT. IN THIS LATTER CONNECTION, I MADE THE
POINT IN BONN 12588-PARA 3 THAT IT WOULD NOT BE

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FEASIBLE IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL TERMS FOR THE U.S. TO

REJECT AN MBFR I AGREEMENT ENTAILING 15 PERCENT REDUCTIONS IN U.S./SOVIET FORCES (INCLUDING A SOVIET TANK ARMY) CONSTRAINTS AND A RUSSIAN AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO MBFR II NEGOTIATIONS. I CLOSED BY URGING THE DEFENSE MINISTER TO CONSIDER WHETHER HIS MINISTRY COULD NOT ACCEPT THE NEW U.S. LANGUAGE FOR PARA 17 OF THE ALLIANCE POSITION PAPER, AS SET FORTH IN STATE 179893-PARA 25.

2. IN REPLYING LEBER EMPHASIZED HIS WELL-KNOWN CONCERN THAT THE MBFR PROJECT MUST ALSO PROVIDE AT SOME POINT FOR REDUCTIONS IN BUNDESWEHR FORCES. OTHERWISE, HE SAID THE EROSION IN EUROPEAN DEFENSE EFFORTS, COULD BECOME DANGEROUS; HE SAID SUCH A TREND, ALREADY EVIDENT IN DENMARK, THE NETHERLANDS AND BELGIUM, COULD UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES ALSO AFFECT THE BUNDESWEHR. LEBER, THEREFORE, LIKES THE IDEA OF USING MBFR TO FIX A FLOOR, BENEATH WHICH EUROPEAN EFFORTS COULD NOT GO. ON THE OTHER HAND, LEBER SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE U.S. WISH TO EMPHASIZE THE REDUCTION OF STATIONED FORCES--WHICH HE DEFINED AS STSOLELY U.S. AND SOVIET FORCES--IN THE INITIAL PHASE OF MBFR. LEBER SAID HE WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH THIS U.S. OBJECTIVE BUT ALSO HOPED THAT HIS PARTICULAR CONCERNS WERE FULLY UNDERSTOOD.

3. THE DEFENSE MINISTER CONCLUDED BY SAYING THE U.S. POSITION WHICH HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO HIM, INCLUDING THE NEW U.S. FORMULATION FOR PARA 17, WOULD BE EARNESTLY CONSIDERED, THAT HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SCHEEL, AND THAT HE COULD IMAGINE THAT THE MBFR TOPIC MIGHT ALSO ARISE IN THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH SCHEEL WOULD HAVE IN NEW YORK WITH DR. KISSINGER. HILLENBRAND

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